



COA *Frontline*

VOL. 41, ISSUE 10

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2005

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Everything Takes Longer Than You Expect

Dear Friends of COA and the PHS Commissioned Corps,



Jerry Farrell
Executive Director

We had some problems with getting the November issue of *Frontline* delivered in a timely manner. Those difficulties should be resolved now, and the January issue will, hopefully, find its way to you in January.

Apologies to those were reading my wishes for a happy Thanksgiving just before the December holidays!

In my November column, I speculated on what a new four year term for the Bush Administration would mean for the Commissioned Corps. As I sit with keyboard in lap now, just before Christmas, we have some inkling of what may lie ahead. But the future remains unclear.

As expected, Secretary Thompson announced his resignation as Health and Human Services Secretary a few weeks ago. Much less expected was the President's nomination of EPA Administrator and former Utah governor Mike Leavitt as Secretary Thompson's replacement. Governor Leavitt has been the EPA Administrator for only about 13 months and his views regarding the PHS Commissioned Corps are largely

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Surgeon General Carmona Has No Plans to Leave After Boss's Departure from Bush Administration

By C.T. REVERE, Tucson Citizen

Surgeon General Richard Carmona says he plans to finish his first term as the nation's top doctor despite the changing face of the Bush administration, which now includes a new boss in the Department of Health and Human Services.

"I have no plans of leaving yet," Carmona told the Citizen in a telephone interview Friday, the day Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson announced his departure. "My term runs for another year and a half or so, and the president has been very happy with my performance and so has Secretary Thompson."

Carmona, a former public health official and SWAT surgeon in Pima County, said he's marked his first 2 years in Washington in incremental successes and credits his outgoing boss with carrying the load on major national public health issues.

"I think he's done an excellent job and faced more challenges in four years than most people do in a lifetime," Carmona said of Thompson. "He's had 9/11, anthrax, the flu, mad cow disease, and through it all he's been a strong, passionate leader."

Carmona has not had the public health bully pulpit his predecessors enjoyed.

Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, arguably the most recognizable surgeon general in recent history, said Carmona has done a good job while struggling to establish his place in an administration that has tight controls

on its people.

"When you are comparing me with Dr. Carmona, you have to consider who we work for," Koop, 88, said in a telephone interview from his New Hampshire home. "I worked for Ronald Reagan, who gave you a job and let you do it. That's an entirely different setup than Rich has right now. If I was surgeon general right now, I'd be as visible as he is. In my days with Reagan, it was sort of assumed that I was the government's spokesperson on public health issues. Rich has never had that privilege, but that's no reflection on him."

Dr. Elizabeth MacNeill, Pima County's chief medical officer, said Carmona "has been held in check somewhat" by the administration.

"It's unfortunate because the

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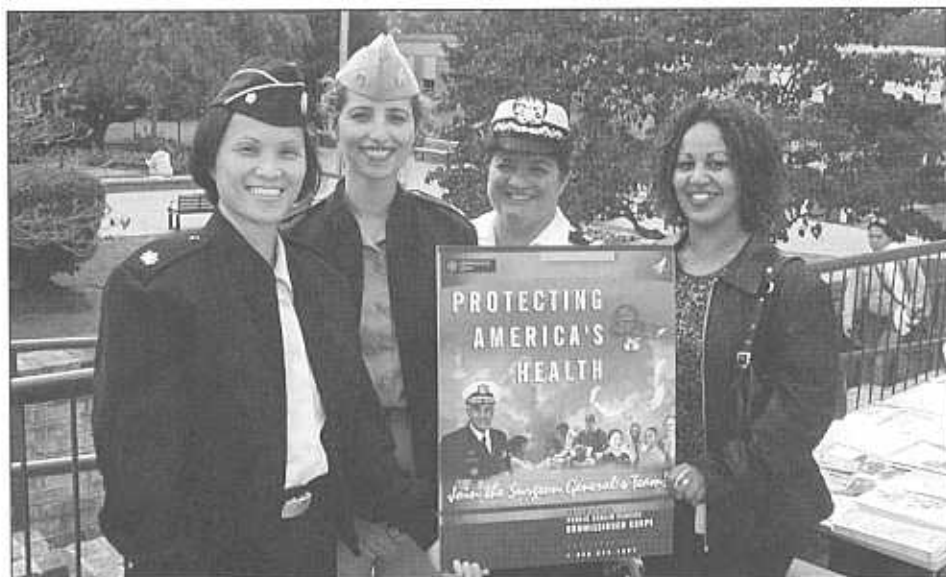
Public Health Pharmacists Hold Pharmacists Week Intervention at Community College

Article submitted by CDR Charlie Hoppes, Safety Evaluator, Food and Drug Administration.

Fall is in the air. Curious students pause at tables for free handouts then linger to talk to pharmacists about health issues or a career of government service in the PHS. "I'm a diabetic." "Where can I get the flu shot?" a student asks. LT Tia Harper-Velazquez, a PHS pharmacist, who also works at Giant Pharmacy, is ready with an answer.

During the last week of October, the Public Health Pharmacy Working Group of the PharmPAC celebrated National Pharmacists Week by visiting Montgomery Community College. For the first three days of the event, pharmacists provided their public health message at the Rockville campus. On Thursday and Friday, students were again greeted by the pharmacists, this time in the entrance of the Humanities building at the Germantown, Maryland campus.

Students stopping at the tables received information about a range of health issues including topics ordinarily associated with pharmacy counseling, such as smoking cessation and poisoning prevention, as well as broader public health topics such as exercise and healthful eating choices, responsible sexual activity, suicide prevention, and substance abuse. In preparing for the event, pharmacist participants were amazed at the wealth of public health information provided by the government at no charge. High quality brochures, available from a variety of government agencies arrived within one or two weeks of request. Much of the information could be downloaded and printed directly. A list of government resources as well as information and pictures about PHS Pharmacists Week 2004 can be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/pharmacy/phpharm/week2.html>. Information for students on a career in the PHS was provided by Penny Coppola, DCP Associate Recruiter Program Coordinator.



Participants of PHS Pharmacist Week 2004 at Montgomery Community College from left to right, LCDR Hawyee Yan, LT Brenda Marques, CDR Carol Holquist, and pharmacy student, Berekty Berhe.

As part of a broader effort to promote healthy living, the public health pharmacy group hopes to hold up the success of the Pharmacist Week 2004 and similar activities as an example to encourage pharmacist volunteerism nationwide. During the October PharmPAC meeting, APHA executive vice president and CEO, John Gans, PharmD, was presented with a proposal to partner with the PHS for the purpose of encouraging volunteer efforts of pharmacists to address broad public health issues. The PharmPAC is optimistic, that by partnering with the APHA, it can solicit broader support for pharmacist volunteerism to address major public health problems. Take advantage of the availability of free high quality materials from government sources, and come together with other PHS officers to volunteer in your community. The experience is highly rewarding, from the camaraderie and also from the fulfillment of civic duty.

Another great way to volunteer is through the Medical Reserve Corps. The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program is a grassroots White House initiative focused on strengthening communities by giving medical and public health

volunteers a way to offer their skills to their local communities. MRC volunteers can supplement the existing local emergency response programs or public health activities. MRC volunteers may work on a variety of local initiatives such as outreach and prevention efforts, immunization programs, blood drives, as well as, disaster and emergency response activities. No matter the health needs, the local MRC units strive to strengthen the local response capabilities. They do this through collaboration with their local emergency response partners, such as a local or state Public Health Department or Emergency Management agency, and other organizations, such as private corporations, pharmacies, and hospitals, to offer training to MRC volunteers and support to their communities.

Currently, 223 MRC units have been formed in 46 states, the District of Columbia and the US Virgin Islands, with almost 30,000 volunteers.

Assistance in starting an MRC unit can be found at www.medicalreservecorps.gov. More information can be found by contacting the MRC at 301-443-4951.